

must have been formalized for the Fellow to study and/or conduct research in the foreign location(s).

§ 3402.6 Fellowship appointments.

(a)(1) Fellows must be identified and fellowships must be awarded within 15 months of the effective date of a grant. Institutions failing to meet this deadline will be required to refund monies associated with any unawarded fellowship(s). Fellowship appointments may be held only by persons who enroll and pursue full-time study in a graduate degree program in the national need area and at the degree level supported by the grant.

(2) In addition, fellows:

(i) must be newly recruited;

(ii) must not have been enrolled previously in the academic program at the same degree level;

(iii) must be citizens of nationals of the United States as determined in accordance with Federal law; and

(iv) must have strong interest, as judged by the institution, in pursuing a degree in a targeted national need area and in preparing for a career as a food or agricultural scientist or professional.

(3) It will be the responsibility of the grantee institution to award fellowships to students of superior academic ability.

(4) A doctoral Fellow who maintains satisfactory progress in his or her course of study is eligible for support for a maximum of 36 months within a 45-month period. Master's level Fellows, maintaining satisfactory progress, are eligible for support for a maximum of 24 months during a 33-month period. However, it is the intent of this program that Fellows pursue full-time uninterrupted study or thesis/dissertation research, including time spent pursuing USDA-funded special international study or thesis/dissertation research activities. For Fellows requiring additional time to complete a degree, it is expected that the institution will endeavor to continue supporting individuals originally appointed to fellowships through such other institutional means as teaching assistantships and research assistantships. For Fellows who complete the program of study early (less

than 24 hours for Master's degree or 36 months for doctoral degree), the institution must refund any unexpended monies to the granting agency.

(b) Within the framework of the regulations in this part, all decisions with respect to the appointment of Fellows will be made by the institution. However, institutions are urged to take maximum advantage of opportunities for awarding fellowships to members of underrepresented groups at the graduate level in the food and agricultural sciences, particularly minorities and women. Throughout a Fellow's tenure, the institution should satisfy itself that the Fellow is making satisfactory academic progress, and carrying out, or planning to carry out, national needs related research. If an institution finds it necessary to terminate support of a Fellow for insufficient academic progress or by decision on the part of the Fellow, the Fellow becomes ineligible for future assistance under the program. If a Fellow finds it necessary to interrupt his or her program of study because of health, personal reasons, outside employment, or acceptance of an assistantship, the institution must reserve the funds for the purpose of allowing the Fellow to resume funded study any time within a 9-month period. However, a Fellow who finds it necessary to interrupt his or her program of study more than one time cannot exceed a total of 9 months' cumulative leave status without forfeiting eligibility. For fellowships terminated because of insufficient academic progress, a decision on the part of the Fellow, or reserved due to an interrupted program of study but not resumed within the required time period, unexpended monies must be refunded. Institutions may not use unexpended monies associated with a terminated fellowship to recruit and support a "replacement" Fellow.

(c) Only Fellows enrolled in Master's programs of study may be supported under a Master's fellowship grant. Only Fellows enrolled in doctoral programs of study may be supported under a doctoral fellowship grant.

§ 3402.7 Fellowship activities.

A Fellow must be enrolled as a full-time graduate student, as defined by